

Private Percy James Barber

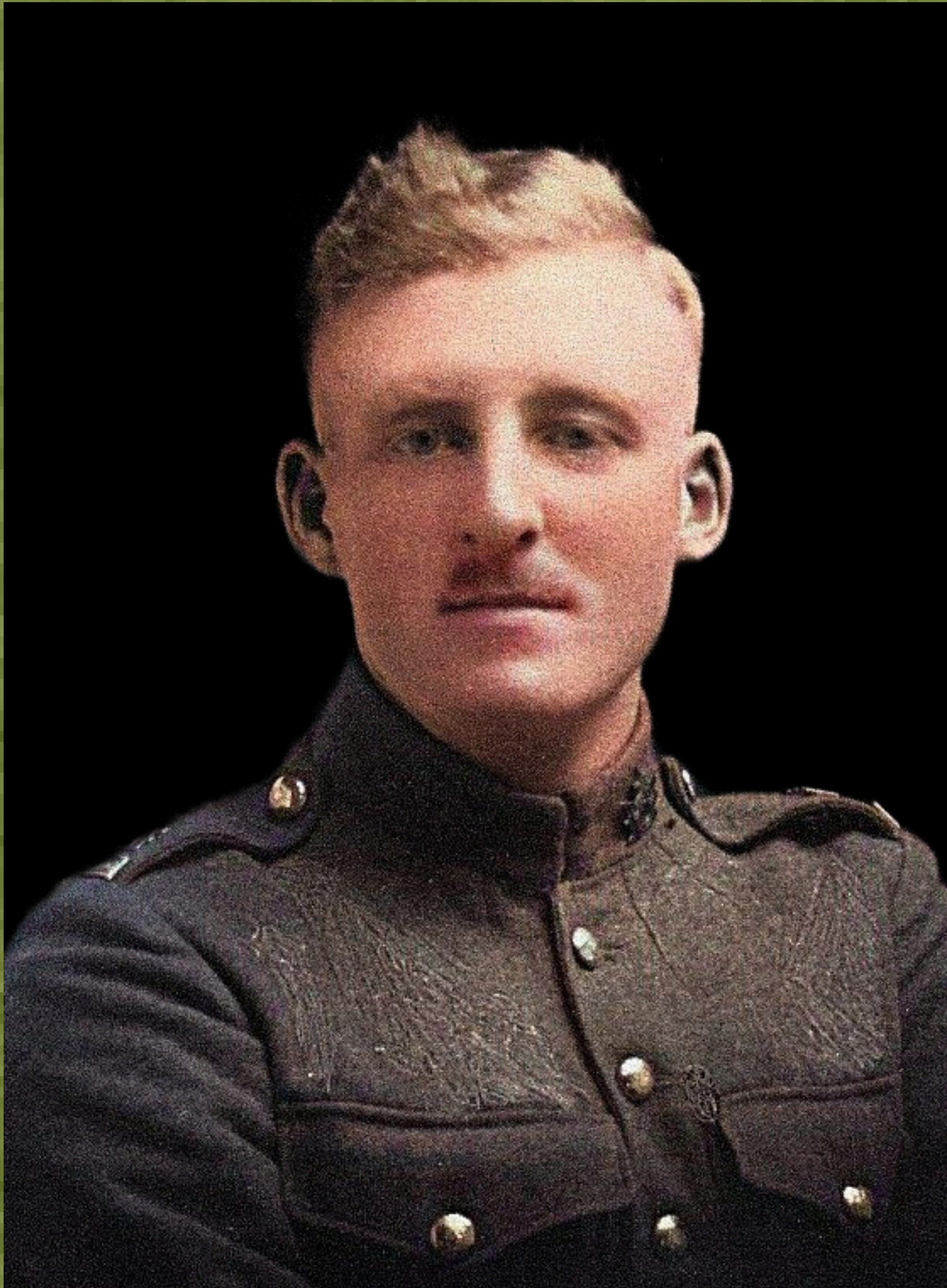
4th Canadian Mounted Rifles

Family Life

Percy James Barber was born on March 31, 1896, to Joseph Henry Barber and Margaret “Maggie” (née Nelson) Barber in Keady, Ontario. Percy was an athletic teen who played baseball for the Owen Sound team. Before enlisting for the Great War, Percy worked as a grocery clerk at a small grocery store on 3rd Avenue East in Owen Sound.

As a late teen, Percy met Myrtle Gough of Markdale. The two fell madly in love and were married on April 25, 1916 in Owen Sound in a small service conducted by Battalion Chaplain, Rev. H.S. Muldowney. Percy and Myrtle had two sons together, Harold Percy Barber born October 21, 1916 and Jack Henry Barber born October 22, 1920.

After the war, Percy worked as a postman with Canada Post (1920-1963), in the souvenir shop on the ship “Norgoma” for two summers, and as a steward at the Owen Sound Armory (1963-1972).



Decorations

- British War Medal
- Victory Medal

Military Service

Private Barber enlisted on November 27, 1915, in Owen Sound. He was attached to the 147th Grey Battalion’s ‘A’ Company. He completed his basic training at Camp Niagara, but poor conditions forced the battalion to Camp Borden. The unit received orders to proceed overseas in September 1916, however an outbreak of diphtheria prevented the unit from deployment overseas. They were held in Amherst, Nova Scotia, until November 1916, when they sailed for Great Britain on the S.S. Olympic.

Percy later joined the 4th Canadian Mounted Rifles and served with the unit through the Battle of Arras and Vimy Ridge.

In 1918, Percy was transferred to the 3rd Battalion Canadian Machine Gun Corps until the end of the war.

Personal Stories

Percy was wounded during the Battle of Vimy Ridge and was sent to No. 35 General Hospital in Calais, France. He often laughed at the medical diagnosis: “Gunshot Wound to the Upper Right Thigh.” He would always tell it like it was, “I got shot in the ass!”

Being newly married, Percy always feared being killed in action making Myrtle a widow so soon after their marriage.